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COUNTY CHARTER PROVISIONS FOR NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

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COUNTY CHARTER PROVISIONS FOR NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS. Senate Constitutional Amendment 8.

Amends Section 7½ of Article XI of Constitution. Adds provision permitting county charters to provide any other mode in place of that provided by general laws for the nomination and/or election of elective officers of counties, townships, road districts and highway construction divisions therein, and to adopt and provide for any system of proportional representation on the legislative or governing body of counties, also the manner of voting under such system.

YES

NO

(For full text of measure see page 28, Part II)

Argument in Favor of Senate Constitutional Amendment No. 8

The purpose of the proposed amendment is to permit counties in framing their own charter under section 7½ of article eleven of the State Constitution, to provide in such charters any mode they see fit for the nomination and for election of all elective officers of the county and of townships, road districts and highway construction divisions. It also permits them to adopt and provide for any system of proportional representation on the legislative or governing body of such county and also the manner of voting under such system.

Under the present constitutional provision county charters must provide that all elective officers shall be nominated and elected in the manner provided by the general laws of the state for the nomination and election for such officers.

The purpose of county charters is to provide home rule for counties; this home rule theory should include the right of each county to select the method of nominating and electing its officers; if it is required to adopt that system which is provided by the general laws, then one of the main objects of home rule would be

defeated. The people in the counties should have the option to nominate and elect their officers by any system that they deem best suited for their purposes.

Many counties also may desire to adopt some method of proportional representation on the legislative or governing body of the county. Due to the fact that the Supreme Court of this state has held that a method of electing officers by a proportional system would be invalid unless authorized by the constitution, the amendment includes by special reference this system of electing the legislative officers of the county. This technical objection makes necessary this amendment in order for the people to rule themselves as they see fit.

As the sole purpose of this amendment is to give to the people of the county the right in adopting their county charter to select the method of nominating and electing county officers, there can be no valid objection against the proposed amendment.

GEO. W. ROCHESTER,
State Senator, 37th District.

J. M. INMAN,
State Senator, 7th District.

PART II
APPENDIX

COUNTY CHARTER PROVISIONS FOR NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS. Senate Constitutional Amendment 8. Amends Section

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7½ of Article XI of Constitution. Adds provision permitting county charters to provide any other mode in place of that provided by general laws for the nomination and/or election of elective officers of counties, townships, road districts and highway construction divisions therein, and to adopt and provide for any system of proportional representation on the legislative or governing body of counties, also the manner of voting under such system.

YES

NO

Senate Constitutional Amendment No. 8—A resolution to propose to the people of the State of California to amend the constitution of said state by amending section 7½ of article eleven, relating to charters of counties and the election of officers thereunder.

Resolved by the Senate, the Assembly concurring. That the Legislature of the State of California at its regular session commencing on the fifth day of January, 1931, two-thirds of the members elected to each of the two houses of the said Legislature voting therefor, hereby proposes to the people of the State of California, that section 7½ of article eleven of the constitution of said state be amended to read as follows:

(This proposed amendment expressly amends an existing section of the constitution; therefore EXISTING PROVISIONS proposed to be DELETED, if any, are printed in STRIKE-OUT TYPE, and NEW PROVISIONS proposed to be INSERTED are printed in BLACK-FACED TYPE.)

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION.

Sec. 7½. Any county may frame a charter for its own government consistent with and subject to the constitution (or, having framed such a charter, may frame a new one); and relating to matters authorized by provisions of the constitution, by causing a board of fifteen freeholders, who have been for at least five years qualified electors thereof, to be elected by the qualified electors of said county, at a general or special election. Said board of freeholders may be so elected in pursuance of an ordinance adopted by the vote of three-fifths of all the members of the board of supervisors of such county, declaring that the public interest requires the election of such board for the purpose of preparing and proposing a charter for said county, or in pursuance of a petition of qualified electors of said county as hereinafter provided. Such petition, signed by fifteen per centum of the qualified electors of said county, computed upon the total number of votes cast therein for all candidates for governor at the last preceding general election at which a governor was elected, praying for the election of a board of fifteen freeholders to prepare and propose a charter for said county, may be filed in the office of the county clerk. It shall be the duty of said county clerk, within twenty days after the filing of said petition, to examine the same, and to ascertain from the record of the

registration of electors of the county, whether said petition is signed by the requisite number of qualified electors. If required by said clerk, the board of supervisors shall authorize him to employ persons specially to assist him in the work of examining such petition, and shall provide for their compensation. Upon the completion of such examination, said clerk shall forthwith attach to said petition his certificate, properly dated, showing the result thereof, and if, by said certificate, it shall appear that said petition is signed by the requisite number of qualified electors, said clerk shall immediately present said petition to the board of supervisors, if it be in session, otherwise at its next regular meeting after the date of such certificate. Upon the adoption of such ordinance, or the presentation of such petition, said board of supervisors shall order the holding of a special election for the purpose of electing such board of freeholders, which said special election shall be held not less than twenty days nor more than sixty days after the adoption of the ordinance aforesaid or the presentation of said petition to said board of supervisors; provided, that if a general election shall occur in said county not less than twenty days nor more than sixty days after the adoption of the ordinance aforesaid, or such presentation of said petition to said board of supervisors, said board of freeholders may be elected at such general election. Candidates for election as members of said board of freeholders shall be nominated by petition, substantially in the same manner as may be provided by general law for the nomination, by petition of electors, of candidates for county offices, to be voted for at general elections. It shall be the duty of said board of freeholders, within one hundred and twenty days after the result of such election shall have been declared by said board of supervisors, to prepare and propose a charter for said county, which shall be signed in duplicate by the members of said board of freeholders, or a majority of them, and be filed, one copy in the office of the county clerk of said county and the other in the office of the county recorder thereof. Said board of supervisors shall thereupon cause said proposed charter to be published for at least ten times in a daily newspaper of general circulation, printed, published and circulated in said county; provided, that in any county where no such daily newspaper is printed, published and circulated, such proposed charter shall be published for at least three times in at least one weekly newspaper, of gen-

eral circulation, printed, published and circulated in such county; and provided, that in any county where neither such daily nor such weekly newspaper is printed, published and circulated, a copy of such proposed charter shall be posted by the county clerk in three public places in said county, and on or near the entrance to at least one public schoolhouse in each school district in said county, and the first publication or the posting of such proposed charter shall be made within fifteen days after the filing of a copy thereof, as aforesaid, in the office of the county clerk. Said proposed charter shall be submitted by said board of supervisors to the qualified electors of said county at a special election held not less than thirty days nor more than sixty days after the completion of such publication, or after such posting; provided, that if a general election shall occur in said county not less than thirty days nor more than sixty days after the completion of such publication, or after such posting, then such proposed charter may be so submitted at such general election. If a majority of said qualified electors, voting thereon at such general or special election, shall vote in favor of such proposed charter, it shall be deemed to be ratified, and shall be forthwith submitted to the Legislature, if it be in regular session, otherwise at its next regular session, or it may be submitted to the Legislature in extraordinary session, for its approval or rejection as a whole, without power of alteration or amendment. Such approval may be made by concurrent resolution, and if approved by a majority vote of the members elected to each house, such charter shall become the charter of such county and shall become the organic law thereof relative to the matters therein provided, and supersede any existing charter framed under the provisions of this section, and all amendments thereof, and shall supersede all laws inconsistent with such charter relative to the matters provided in such charter. A copy of such charter, certified and authenticated by the chairman and clerk of the board of supervisors under the seal of said board and attested by the county clerk of said county, setting forth the submission of such charter to the electors of said county, and its ratification by them, shall, after the approval of such charter by the Legislature, be made in duplicate, and filed, one in the office of the secretary of state and the other, after being recorded in the office of the recorder of said county, shall be filed in the office of the county clerk thereof, and thereafter all courts shall take judicial notice of said charter.

The charter, so ratified, may be amended by proposals therefor submitted by the board of supervisors of the county to the qualified electors thereof at a general or special election held not less than thirty days nor more than sixty days after the publication of such proposals for ten times in a daily newspaper of general circulation, printed, published and circulated in said county; provided, that in any county where no such daily newspaper is printed, published and circulated, such proposed charter shall be published for at least three times in at least one weekly newspaper, of general circulation, printed, published

and circulated in such county; provided, that in any county where neither such daily nor such weekly newspaper is printed, published and circulated, a copy of such proposed charter shall be posted by the county clerk in three public places in said county, and on or near the entrance to at least one public schoolhouse in each school district in said county. If a majority of such qualified electors voting thereon, at such general or special election, shall vote in favor of any such proposed amendment or amendments, or any amendment or amendments proposed by petition as hereinafter provided, such amendment or amendments shall be deemed to be ratified, and shall be forthwith submitted to the Legislature, if it be in regular session, otherwise at its next regular session, or may be submitted to the Legislature in extraordinary session, for approval or rejection as a whole, without power of alteration or amendment, and if approved by the Legislature, as herein provided for the approval of the charter, such charter shall be amended accordingly. A copy of such amendment or amendments shall, after the approval thereof by the Legislature, be made in duplicate, and shall be authenticated, certified, recorded and filed as herein provided for the charter, and with like force and effect. Whenever a petition signed by ten per centum of the qualified electors of any county, computed upon the total number of votes cast in said county for all candidates for governor at the last general election, at which a governor was elected, is filed in the office of the county clerk of said county, petitioning the board of supervisors thereof to submit any proposed amendment or amendments to the charter of such county, which amendment or amendments shall be set forth in full in such petition, to the qualified electors thereof, such petition shall forthwith be examined and certified by the county clerk, and if signed by the requisite number of qualified electors of such county, shall be presented to the said board of supervisors, by the said county clerk, as hereinbefore provided for petitions for the election of boards of freeholders. Upon the presentation of said petition to said board of supervisors, said board must submit the amendment or amendments set forth therein to the qualified electors of said county at a general or special election held not less than thirty days nor more than sixty days after the publication or posting of such proposed amendment or amendments in the same manner as hereinbefore provided in the case of the submission of any proposed amendment or amendments to such charter, proposed and submitted by the board of supervisors. In submitting any such charter, or amendments thereto, any alternative article or proposition may be presented for the choice of the electors, and may be voted on separately without prejudice to others.

Every special election held under the provisions of this section, for the election of boards of freeholders or for the submission of proposed charters, or any amendment or amendments thereto, shall be called by the board of supervisors, by ordinance.

which shall specify the purpose and time of such election and shall establish the election precincts and designate the polling places therein, and the names of the election officers for each such precinct. Such ordinance, prior to such election, shall be published five times in a daily newspaper, or twice in a weekly newspaper, if there be no such daily newspaper, printed, published and circulated in said county; provided, that if no such daily or weekly newspaper be printed or published in such county, then a copy of such ordinance shall be posted by the county clerk in three public places in such county and in or near the entrance to at least one public schoolhouse in each school district therein. In all other respects, every such election shall be held and conducted, the returns thereof canvassed and the result thereof declared by the board of supervisors in the same manner as provided by law for general elections. Whenever boards of freeholders shall be elected, or any such proposed charter, or amendment or amendments thereto, submitted, at a general election, the general laws applicable to the election of county officers and the submission of propositions to the vote of electors, shall be followed in so far as the same may be applicable thereto.

It shall be competent, in all charters, framed under the authority given by this section to provide, in addition to any other provisions allowable by this constitution, and the same shall provide, for the following matters:

1. For boards of supervisors and for the constitution, regulation and government thereof, for the times at which and the terms for which the members of said board shall be elected, for the number of members, not less than three, that shall constitute such boards, for their compensation and for their election, either by the electors of the counties at large or by districts; provided, that in any event said board shall consist of one member for each district, who must be a qualified elector thereof; and

2. For sheriffs, county clerks, treasurers, recorders, license collectors, tax collectors, public administrators, coroners, surveyors, district attorneys, auditors, assessors and superintendents of schools, for the election or appointment of said officers, or any of them, for the times at which and the terms for which, said officers shall be elected or appointed, and for their compensation, or for the fixing of such compensation by boards of supervisors, and, if appointed, for the manner of their appointment; and

3. For the number of justices of the peace and constables for each township, or for the number of such judges and other officers of such inferior courts as may be provided by the constitution or general law, for the election or appointment of said officers, for the times at which and the terms for which said officers shall be elected or appointed, and for their compensation, or for the fixing of such compensation by boards of supervisors, and if appointed, for the manner of their appointment; and

4. For the powers and duties of boards of supervisors and all other county officers, for their removal

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and for the consolidation and segregation of county offices, and for the manner of filling all vacancies occurring therein; provided, that the provisions of such charters relating to the powers and duties of boards of supervisors and all other county officers shall be subject to and controlled by general laws; and

4j. For the assumption and discharge by county officers of certain of the municipal functions of the cities and towns within the county, whenever, in the case of cities and towns incorporated under general laws, the discharge by county officers of such municipal functions is authorized by general law, or whenever, in the case of cities and towns organized under section 8 of this article, the discharge by county officers of such municipal functions is authorized by provisions of the charters, or by amendments thereto, of such cities or towns.

5. For the fixing and regulation by boards of supervisors, by ordinance, of the appointment and number of assistants, deputies, clerks, attaches and other persons to be employed, from time to time, in the several offices of the county, and for the prescribing and regulating by such boards of the powers, duties, qualifications and compensation of such persons, the times at which, and terms for which they shall be appointed, and the manner of their appointment and removal; and

6. For the compensation of such fish and game wardens, probation and other officers as may be provided by general law, or for the fixing of such compensation by boards of supervisors.

All elective officers of counties and of townships, of road districts and of highway construction divisions therein shall be nominated and elected in the manner provided by general laws for the nomination and election of such officers; provided however, it shall be competent in such charters to provide any other mode for their nomination and/or election, and to adopt and provide for any system of proportional representation on the legislative or governing body of counties, also the manner of voting under such system.

All charters framed under the authority given by this section, in addition to the matters herein above specified, may provide as follows:

For offices other than those required by the constitution and laws of the state, or for the creation of any or all of such offices by boards of supervisors, for the election or appointment of persons to fill such offices, for the manner of such appointment, for the times at which and the terms for which such persons shall be so elected or appointed, and for their compensation, or for the fixing of such compensation by boards of supervisors.

For offices hereafter created by this constitution or by general law, for the election or appointment of persons to fill such offices, for the manner of such appointment, for the times at which and the terms for which such persons shall be so elected or appointed, and for their compensation, or for the fixing of such compensation by boards of supervisors.

For the formation, in such counties, of road districts for the care, maintenance, repair, inspection and supervision only of roads, highways and bridges; and for the formation, in such counties, of highway construction divisions for the construction only of roads, highways and bridges; for the inclusion in any such district or division, of the whole or any part of any incorporated city or town, upon ordinance passed by such incorporated city or town authorizing the same, and upon the assent to such inclusion by a majority of the qualified electors of such incorporated city or town, or portion thereof, proposed to be so included, at an election held for that purpose; for the organization, government, powers and jurisdiction of such districts and divisions, and for raising revenue therein, for such purposes, by taxation, upon the assent of a majority of the qualified electors of such districts or divisions, voting at an election to be held for that purpose; for the incurring of indebtedness therefor by such counties, districts or divisions for such purposes respectively, by the issuance and sale, by the counties, of bonds of such counties, districts or divisions, and the expenditure of the proceeds of the sale of such bonds, and for levying and collecting taxes against the property of the counties, districts or divisions, as the case may be, for the payment of the principal and interest of such indebtedness at maturity; provided, that any such indebtedness shall not be incurred without the assent of two-thirds of the qualified electors of the county, district or division, as the case may be, voting at an election to be held for that purpose, nor unless before or at the time of incurring such indebtedness provision shall be made for the collection of an annual tax sufficient to pay the interest on such indebtedness as it falls due, and also for a sinking fund for the payment of the principal thereof on or before maturity, which shall not exceed forty years from the time of contracting the same, and the procedure for voting, issuing and selling such bonds shall, except in so far as the same shall be prescribed in such charters, conform to general laws

for the authorizing and incurring by counties of bonded indebtedness, so far as applicable; provided, further, that provisions in such charters for the construction, care, maintenance, repair, inspection and supervision of roads, highways and bridges for which aid from the state is granted, shall be subject to such regulations and conditions as may be imposed by the Legislature.

Whenever any county has framed and adopted a charter, and the same shall have been approved by the Legislature, as herein provided, the general laws adopted by the Legislature in pursuance of sections 4 and 5 of this article, shall, as to such county, be superseded by said charter as to matters for which, under this section it is competent to make provision in such charter, and for which provision is made therein, except as herein otherwise expressly provided; and except that any such charter shall not affect the tenure of office of the elective officers of the county, or of any district, township or division thereof, in office at the time such charter goes into effect, and such officers shall continue to hold their respective offices until the expiration of the term for which they shall have been elected, unless sooner removed in the manner provided by law.

The charter of any county, adopted under the authority of this section, may be surrendered and annulled with the assent of two-thirds of the qualified electors of such county, voting at a special election, held for that purpose, and to be ordered and called by the board of supervisors of the county upon receiving a written petition, signed and certified as hereinabove provided for the purposes of the adoption of charters, requesting said board to submit the question of the surrender and annulment of such charter to the qualified electors of such county, and, in the event of the surrender and annulment of any such charter, such county shall thereafter be governed under general laws in force for the government of counties.

The provisions of this section shall not be applicable to any county that is consolidated with any city.